1. **Applicant Identification**  
City of Ocala, Florida  
110 SE Watula Ave.  
Ocala, FL 34471

2. **Funding Requested**  
a. **Assessment Grant Type**: Community-Wide  
b. **Federal Funds Requested**  
  i. $500,000  
  ii. Not Applicable

3. **Location**  
a) City of Ocala  
b) Marion County  
c) Florida

4. **Target Area and Priority Site/Property Information**  
**Target Area**: Census Tracts (CT) 18 (12083001800), 19 (12083001900), and 14.01 (12083001401)  
**Priority Sites**:  
Concord Parking Lot – 102 NE 1st Ave, Ocala, FL 34470  
Industrial Laundry Facility – 317 NE 2nd St., Ocala, FL 34470

5. **Contacts**  
a. **Project Director**  
Aubrey Hale, Chief Development Official  
(352) 629-8550  
ahale@ocalafl.org  
201 SE 3rd Street, 2nd Floor  
Ocala, FL 34471

b. **Chief Executive/Highest Ranking Elected Official**  
Justin Grabelle, Council President  
(352) 401-3976  
jgrabelle@ocalafl.org  
110 SE Watula Ave.  
Ocala, FL 34471

6. **Population**  
### 7. Other Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Factors</th>
<th>Page #</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community population is 10,000 or less.</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30% or more of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section I.A., for priority site(s) within the target area.</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2011 or later) or is closing.</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 8. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority

See attached

### 9. Releasing Copies of Applications

Not Applicable
October 12, 2021

Cindy Nolan
Brownfields Program
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
61 Forsyth Street, S.W. 10th Floor
Atlanta, GA 30303-8960
nolan.cindyj@epa.gov

Dear Ms. Nolan:

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (Department) acknowledges and supports the City of Ocala’s Brownfields grant application for a Community-Wide Hazardous Substance and Petroleum or Petroleum Products Assessment Grant. The Department understands that this application has been prepared in accordance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) guidance document EPA-OLEM-OBLR-21-04, titled “Guidelines for Brownfields Assessment Grants.” This letter of acknowledgement addresses the requirement for a “Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority,” described in SECTION IV.D.8. EPA Brownfields grant funding will strengthen the City’s cleanup and redevelopment efforts. This federal grant effort also supports Florida’s Brownfields Redevelopment Act and the Department’s role in administration of site rehabilitation of contaminated sites.

The Department encourages EPA grant recipients to use the incentives and resources available through Florida’s Brownfields Redevelopment Program with EPA grant funding to enhance the success of their Brownfields project. The Department recommends that the City consider including Brownfields sites or areas that could potentially receive federal funding in a state-designated Brownfield area. The City is also encouraged to contact Lu Burson, the Central District Brownfields Coordinator, at (407) 897-2912 to learn more about the Florida Brownfields Redevelopment Program.

Sincerely,

Kelly Crain, Environmental Manager
Brownfields and CERCLA Site Screening Section

KC/jc

cc:
Aubrey Hale, City of Ocala – ahale@ocalafl.org
Lu Burson, DEP Central District – lu.burson@floridadep.gov
FY22 Brownfield Assessment Grant
Narrative
1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION
   a. Target Area and Brownfields
      i. Background and Description of Target Area: Ocala, located
         in North Central Florida, encompasses 45 square miles and is at the junction of five major
         agricultural production through the citrus industry, followed by the railroad which reached the city
         in 1881. From the 1930s to the 1960s, US-441/301 was the primary highway connecting the
         northern US with Florida. This accessibility brought tourists and industry to the community,
         including vehicle assembly and customization, manufacturing, food production, fuel depots, and
         distribution centers. Ocala is synonymous with the adjacent Silver Springs State Park, a world-
         famous attraction that has provided a strong tourism base to the community for decades. The roads
         through Ocala and the once bustling downtown were a haven for motels, fueling and auto repair
         stations, and agricultural and industrial businesses. Many of the fueling stations were abandoned
         prior to the underground storage tank (UST) closure requirements under US EPA regulations.
         Additionally, many of the industrial businesses were run with no environmental regulations to
         guide their practices. Industrial businesses remain integral to the economy today, and recently
         emphasis has been placed on attracting logistics services for trucking and transportation as the City
         is home to a newly emerging downtown, several large distribution centers (FedEx, Chewy,
         AutoZone, and Amazon), and mid-sized manufacturing.

         The target area for this brownfield assessment grant consists of Census Tracts (CT) 18, 19, and
         14.01, all federally designated Opportunity Zones (OZ), and coincides with the City’s
         redevelopment plans for the Midtown/Downtown and North Magnolia areas, known as the
         Downtown Development District. The areas have a blighted commercial presence with a heavy
         industrial setting in North Magnolia. The residential communities within these areas consist of a
         sensitive low-income population with a number of environmental justice disadvantages, including
         high unemployment exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic in recent years. After decades of
         neglect coupled with the flight of residents to the suburbs, the target area is poised for
         redevelopment. The City is committed to bringing the Downtown Development District back to
         its rightful place as the center of economic, cultural, and civic activity in the region. This will be
         accomplished through prosperous growth of residential, restaurant, entertainment, and retail hubs,
         as emphasized in the City’s Ocala 2035 Vision Plan.

      ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s): Commercial and industrial businesses have
         come and gone in the target area for over a century, leaving behind an abundance of brownfield
         sites. The City has created, digitized, and maintained an extensive inventory of approximately
         2,300 brownfield sites in the Ocala’s Brownfield Information System (OBIS), a GIS-based
         inventory system. The City intends to continue to build and prioritize its inventory with assistance
         from project partners and target-area residents. The target area is littered with remnants of
         industrial manufacturing, feed and fertilizer storage facilities, former gas stations, automotive
         garages, abandoned tank sites, and dry cleaners. There are approximately 100 registered tank and
         petroleum storage contaminated sites within the target area. The City has identified two priority
         sites based on consistent interest from developers to redevelop the sites into mixed-use properties
         which align with the City’s redevelopment plans, including the Ocala 2035 Vision Plan and
         Midtown Master Plan. Site access has been secured for these two priority sites.

         The Concord Parking Lot is a 1.15-acre site located to the northeast of the intersection of NE
         1st Street and N Magnolia Avenue in Midtown/Downtown. The site, historically a post office,
         was demolished in the 1960s. It is now owned by the City and used as parking for surrounding
         businesses. The site’s post office basement may remain beneath the site and hold demolition
debris containing lead, asbestos, and volatile organic compound (VOC)/semi-volatile organic compound (SVOC) petroleum impacts from the historical boiler system. Historical information reviewed indicates documented petroleum impacts to soil and groundwater from past use of the surrounding sites adjacent to the north, east, south and west of the site. Recent assessment of a former dry cleaner historically located to the north has identified halogenated chlorinated solvent impacts to groundwater with a large plume impacting the Concord Parking Lot. The Concord Parking Lot is situated within 0.75-miles to the closest school, 5 blocks of existing neighborhoods, the Osceola Trak, and the Marion County Courts Complex. The site is in a prime location for partnership with developers for mixed-use designs with provisions for a parking garage and affordable housing, as the City has implemented the inclusion of affordable housing in all development negotiations. Unfortunately, the City’s FY18 Assessment grant could not fund the assessment of the extent of the detected releases, as available grant dollars were exhausted. The assessment and redevelopment of the Concord Parking Lot is recognized as a paramount initiative in revitalization of the area as it is a Catalytic Opportunity Site in the Midtown Master Plan and is identified as a catalytic site in the Midtown Master Plan.

The Industrial Laundry Facility is a 3.13-acre commercial dry-cleaning facility made up of two parcels located within Midtown adjacent to Tuscarawilla Park. The site consists of an approximate 36,000 square foot building built in 1947 with associated parking and utilities. The building is in operational condition, but has numerous outdoor tanks and mechanical components, as well as separate warehouse structures that provide for an industrial feel in an area slated for increased residential/mixed-use development. The owners are interested in relocating the business, which would allow the City to incentivize redevelopment of the property. Redevelopment would align with current plans adjacent to the site, which include the redevelopment of the Fire Station #1 Catalytic Site as a brewery and surrounding parcels as residential/mixed use. The long-term historic use of the site as a laundry (1948) and dry-cleaner (1970), coupled with the historic use of onsite underground storage tanks (1986) brings high probability for subsurface impacts to soil and groundwater associated with VOCs, SVOCs, metals, and possibly Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Additionally, the structures on the site likely contain asbestos and lead containing paint requiring survey prior to demolition. This site in the heart of Midtown and is seen as a top priority for redevelopment with strong potential for future mixed-use residential/commercial development with an affordable housing component, aligning with the Midtown/Tuscarawilla Park Master Plan. Additionally, the site is across from an identified catalytic site in Midtown Master Plan.

b. Revitalization of the Target Area i. Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans: This project seeks to direct revitalization to some of the most economically disadvantaged portions of Ocala and generate interest in ideally located properties overlooked due to racial, socioeconomic, and environmental stigmas. The City has initiated the Midtown and Downtown Master Plans and North Magnolia Community Redevelopment Area Development Plan intended to limit light industrial use while promoting a walkable suburbia infused with mixed-use development and affordable housing. The City envisions developing safe affordable housing and infrastructure with accessibility and connectivity. The City started a multi-year process developing a vision plan to guide the community for the next fifteen years. The resulting Ocala 2035 Vision Plan identified the need for redevelopment in the target area among other areas of the City. The North Magnolia Community Redevelopment Area Development Plan was adopted in 2019 as a community-driven collective effort of community residents, businesses, and City staff. These plans call for amendments to the Land Development Code to encourage
innovative design in building reuse which will include a task force of citizens, local professionals and/or Leadership Group. The plans also strive to develop a **Form-Based Code** (FBC) to regulate the desired site designs and building form for appropriate areas of the City, as well as to create an incentive program to encourage infill, development or redevelopment. Both priority sites are located within the Ocala Vision and Midtown Master Plan. Future affordable housing/mixed-use developments will benefit from existing infrastructure, especially public transportation and the proximity of the housing to the employment availability downtown. The assessment and cleanup of brownfields within the target area will further the goals and priorities of the City’s plans and programs. These projects support redevelopment strategies that incorporate equitable development (benefiting all Ocala residents) and sustainable practice/livability principles. In October 2017, the City adopted a resolution to expand a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and brownfields area based on input from the community. Sites have been identified and prioritized through community engagement, with the goal of expanding brownfield redevelopment in the target area. The brownfield properties best suited to capitalize on current growth and development interest opportunities include the **Concord Parking Lot** and **Industrial Laundry Facility**. The locations of the two priority sites will make them suitable for **mixed-use retail and commercial/office centers, with a residential/affordable housing component**. Not only will these uses add employment opportunities, but they will create affordable housing opportunities for the target area’s sensitive populations while enhancing the City’s attractiveness.

**ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategy:** The predominantly African American community is hampered by low income and persistent poverty coupled with unemployment issues which have stemmed from historic residential segregation that exacerbates inequalities to this day. The target area includes three federally designated **OZs**, which will continue to be marketed to prospective developers to spur revitalization of the **distressed neighborhoods**. The anticipated reuse of the priority sites aligns with the City’s revitalization plans and will create an **economic benefit** of new jobs/income sources and a **non-economic benefit** of affordable housing, while transforming historical industrial blight into anchors for community redevelopment. The resulting tax revenues will allow for the completion of additional projects throughout the target area which will serve to facilitate continued revitalization. Affordable housing will increase the residential population and stimulate the growth of businesses to support the area. Addressing brownfield sites throughout the target area will directly impact economic growth and serve to remove the environmental stigma surrounding potential redevelopment sites.

To promote sustainability, the City’s Comprehensive Plan encourages the incorporation of **renewable energy** in development designs. The City has initiated **solar programs** allowing for voluntary use of renewable power and Net Solar Metering that provides residents generating renewable power to receive a bill credit. Once redevelopment occurs, residents will enjoy a more secure environment fostering a close-knit community that can readily enjoy safe access to newly created jobs, as well as schools, churches, community events, and parks like the existing Tuslawilla Park, all within walking distance. By instituting the revitalization plan and facilitating site redevelopment/reuse, the **disadvantages communities** within the target area will be provided with a platform to **overcome the environmental justice issues** overwhelming their community.

**c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources**

**i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse:** The City as a local unit of government is eligible to apply for county, state, and federal grant funding. The City is making every effort to secure additional funding to further their Brownfield Program redevelopment goals and is currently pursuing the following funding opportunities:
ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure: The existing infrastructure (sewer, water, power, roads) throughout the target area is suitable for redevelopment activities. The City has made Capital Improvements over the past few years, evidenced by a water main replacement project including the target area, and will use additional funding through state and federal grant opportunities and local tax collections as improvements are needed to support redevelopment. The infrastructure currently in place for the priority sites will allow for immediate development.

2. **COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

   a. **Community Need**

      i. **The Community’s Need for Funding:** The target area exemplifies a community in need of revitalization. The target-area (CT 14.01, 18, and 19) residents maintain an average per-capita income of $16,857, barely half the state per-capita income of $31,619.\(^1\) The target area’s median household income of $29,029 is less than half the national average of $62,284.\(^1\) In addition, **people living below the poverty level in the target area comprise 38% compared to the US average of 13%.\(^1\)** The high percentage of low-income residents impedes any major tax increases to fund brownfield assessment projects.

      Due to limited tax revenue from the area and economic strain from COVID-19 on revenues and funding mechanisms, the City cannot afford to conduct brownfields assessment on its own, but the EPA Brownfield funding can help identify contaminants and reduce the threats to the sensitive populations through assessment, remediation, and redevelopment in the target area.

      ii. **Threats to Sensitive Populations**

         (1) Health or Welfare of Sensitive Populations: Within the target area, the sensitive populations include African American minorities, single mothers, and the impoverished. The target area’s African American population is 42%, more than three times the US average (13%).\(^1\) The target area includes high percentages of impoverished residents, including female heads of household with children under the age of 18 at an average of 68%, much higher than the national average of 36%.\(^1\) In addition, **35% of all families** within the target area are below the poverty level (US 10%), 51% of those families with children under the age of 18, significantly higher than the national average of 15%.\(^1\) Poverty begets the need for government assistance, shown by **41% of the target area households dependent on SNAP Benefits (food stamps)** compared to 12% nationally.\(^1\) The poverty level is further stressed by the current unemployment rate of 13% in the target area, higher than the national average of 5%.\(^1\) The unemployment, poverty, and resultant dependency on government assistance is worsened by the target area’s status as a **USDA designated food desert**; **21% of target area households have no access to a vehicle**, and must rely on public transportation or walk over two miles for fresh food.\(^1\)

      With incomes so low, target-area residents find it difficult to pay for basic needs such as shelter, and **rental vacancies in the target area are at 11%, twice the national average of 6%.\(^1\)** Residents’ inability to obtain affordable housing has caused a rise in homelessness, which

\(^{1}\) US Census: 2015-2019 American Community Survey
increases crime rates and incidence of drug and alcohol addiction, putting further strain on the community. Homeless populations create daily impacts to home and business owners and stress emergency and healthcare service providers in the target area. The crime rate in the City is 50 per 1,000-residents, one of the highest in the country, with a one in 20 chance of being a victim of crime (crime data is not available at the census tract target area level).2 The violent crime rate in Ocala is one of the highest in the nation for communities of any size, with a 1 in 118 chance of becoming a victim.2 The property crime rate is much higher with a 1 in 24 chance of becoming a victim, a rate of 42 per 1,000.2 Crime can lead to other welfare and health issues, such as drug abuse. The City has a systemic problem with opioid and heroin abuse as shown by a staggering 136 overdose cases, 21 ending in death, as of May 2021.3

A strong emphasis for brownfield funding will be placed on development of affordable housing along with access to basic goods and jobs that will have a dramatic impact on homelessness, crime, and drug problems. Based on community input, the overwhelming need identified in the target area is affordable housing. By securing this grant and promoting brownfield redevelopment opportunities, the City can send a signal to developers and brownfields stakeholders that there is not just local, but federal support for revitalization in this promising area. Threats to residents will be reduced by bringing these sites to the public's attention, completing assessments that identify the presence and extent of contamination, and directing remediation and redevelopment through engineering and/or institutional controls.

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions: The pervasiveness of brownfield sites throughout the target area carries a high propensity for petroleum and hazardous substance impacts, a health concern for the sensitive target-area populations. Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the City and respiratory disease the third (health data at the census tract/target area level is not available).4 These causes of death are disproportionately higher in low-income and high-minority parts of town, which include the target area. The Concord Parking Lot and Industrial Laundry Facility priority sites, along with surrounding properties, are prime examples of sites contaminated from long-term historic use that have compounded health concerns in the community. The potential contaminants of concern associated with the priority sites and target area consist of VOCs, SVOCs, heavy metals, PCBs, and pesticides/herbicides, which are linked to cancer and respiratory diseases. The NATA Cancer Risk for the target area is in the 83rd percentile, the NATA Diesel PM in the 65th percentile, and the respiratory hazard index is in the 71st percentile within the state.5 There were 785 hospitalizations in 2019 from Asthma per 100,000 people in Marion County, compared to 657 in Florida (city and target area level health data is not available for this factor).6 The City’s death rates for cancer maintained a rate of 197.2 deaths per 100,000 people from 2013 to 2017, above the state rate of 155.3 deaths.6 Additionally, the top cause of death for individuals 45 to 64 years of age is cancer.6 By identifying contaminants at brownfield sites throughout the blighted communities of the target area, the threat to the sensitive populations’ health will be reduced as the opportunity for a healthier life is made possible through EPA Brownfield funding.

(3) Promoting Environmental Justice: The target area suffers from environmental justice (EJ) disadvantages correlated to unemployment and low income and persistent poverty, reduced access to goods and services (food desert), and distressed neighborhoods with a lack of affordable housing, which has directly impacted the African American population who make up the majority

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4 2020–2024 Marion County Community Health Improvement Plan, Published January 2020
5 Environmental Justice Screening Report
6 Florida Department of Health, Florida Health Charts, Marion County
of the target area residents. Blight and the suspected environmentally impacted properties have created distressed neighborhoods which have decreased taxable revenue, decreased property values, and reduced ability to market properties for redevelopment. This only adds to the issues impacting minorities within the target area, especially highlighted in CT 18 where non-white minorities make up 94% and African Americans make up 91% of the residents. Of this group, 68% of families with children under the age of 18 are below the poverty level.

The sensitive populations face EJ problems stemming from historical and current industrial practices and environmental factors that lead to high rates of disease. The respiratory index in the target area is 0.54, higher than the national average of 0.44. The NATA Diesel PM (80-90th), Cancer Risk (50-60th), and Respiratory Index (60-70th) of the target area compared to the EPA Region is high, directly correlating to the aforementioned high cancer and respiratory disease rates. The EPA Brownfield Grant Program will be instrumental in both reducing and reversing these negative impacts through the identification of contaminants through site assessment and remediation and subsequently allow for redevelopment, increased taxable revenue and property values, as well as provide jobs, housing and income sources. Funding from this grant will affirm EPA’s commitment to address the EJ disparities in this area and will invigorate public engagement and dialogue in its planning and development efforts. To further promote EJ, the City is highly incentivizing affordable housing in the target area. Tackling these EJ concerns will facilitate a shift away from the former use of the area for commercial/industrial practices that no longer serve to directly benefit the immediate disadvantaged community.

b. Community Engagement
i. Project Involvement & ii. Project Roles: Several local organizations throughout the community have expressed a desire to be a project partner. Below is a sampling of partners who will be involved in making decisions in the process of site selection, prioritization, cleanup, and future redevelopment of the priority brownfield sites for this project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Org.</th>
<th>Point of Contact</th>
<th>Specific involvement in the project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chamber of Economic Partnership (CEP)</td>
<td>Mr. Kevin Sheilley, <a href="mailto:kevin@OcalaCEP.com">kevin@OcalaCEP.com</a></td>
<td>The CEP is a non-profit designed to improve economic prosperity with our key areas of focus: Business Attraction, Business Retention and Business Creation. CEP will assist with site identification, business attraction and retention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Source Citrus (CSC) Levy/Marion</td>
<td>Ms. Kathleen Woodring, <a href="mailto:kwoodring@careersourceclm.com">kwoodring@careersourceclm.com</a></td>
<td>CSC strives to collaborate with community partners to develop world-class education/training and employment services to meet regional needs. CSC will assist with site prioritization and providing workforce services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Magnolia Business Community</td>
<td>Mr. Clark Yandle, 352.730.3000</td>
<td>The North Magnolia Business Community is dedicated to maintaining local businesses. They will assist with outreach, as well as business growth and prosperity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Business Alliance</td>
<td>Mr. Rusty Juergens, 352.840.5999</td>
<td>The Downtown Business Alliance is dedicated to the improvement and development of the downtown area. They will assist with cleanup/future reuse planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocala Housing Authority</td>
<td>Dr. Gwendolyn B. Dawson 352.369.2636</td>
<td>The Ocala Housing Authority is committed to providing and expanding safe, decent, and sanitary housing in the most cost-efficient manner, to the residents of Marion County. They will assist with site identification to aid in building better neighborhoods.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iii. Incorporating Community Input: The City has prepared a Community Involvement Plan (CIP) during their FY18 Assessment Grant Program, which will be updated as a first step in the execution of the proposed project. The CIP will rely on input from the community and will outline planned community engagement activities, a programming schedule, and key stakeholders. The CIP will...

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8 Environmental Justice Screening Report
build on existing public involvement in implementing the Midtown/Downtown and North Magnolia redevelopment plans.

The City’s goals for community involvement efforts are to give the public accessible, accurate, and timely information; ensure adequate opportunity for meaningful participation and for input to be considered; reflect community concerns, questions, and information needs in program activities and decisions; and respect and fully consider public input throughout the process. Dedication to this process will be maintained despite COVID-19 pandemic conditions. The City offers Zoom meeting options in addition to socially distanced in-person meetings. The City will ensure that residents are provided with ample opportunity to obtain information despite social distancing requirements and will use various means of outreach that follow CDC/municipal guidelines. A modified tour using a video that provides scenes and clips of the target community will be used during webinar meetings and will be posted on City social media.

The City announced on July 15, 2021 at the Brownfield Advisory Committee Meeting, their intention to reapply for a Brownfield Assessment Grant. The City will continue seeking meaningful input from all target-area members in its Brownfield Program through online and in-person community and civic meetings, events, and targeted outreach and will leverage project-partner resources to encourage involvement and outreach/education. The City will respond directly to community input/comments during meetings or will issue statements via memorandum, online posts, or public displays within days to a week of most inquiries. The City and its eleven-member Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC), made up of citizens, professionals, and business owners recruited based on their engagement in current civic and business organizations, will lead these efforts. The City and BAC social media audience will be further developed to provide a stage for distributing information. The BAC will be integral to site selection, reuse planning, and overall redevelopment activities. City webpage posts, public displays, and mailers will provide a variety of informational resources. Additionally, many of the BAC are also members of the CRA, bringing a strong redevelopment mindset to the group. In the event there are non-English speaking individuals present at events, a translator will be made available.

3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS
a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs: The City of Ocala is requesting a US EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant in the amount of $500,000 for community-wide assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task 1: Outreach</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Implementation</strong>: The City’s Brownfield Project Director will update the existing Community Involvement Plan (CIP) and brownfield project website and will create new outreach materials and social media posts with the assistance of the environmental consultant (consultant). City staff will lead community meetings (virtual/online during COVID-19 and in-person post COVID-19) to keep the public informed on project plans and updates. Supplies are budgeted for the printing of outreach materials (brochures/handouts) and office supplies to manage the grant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anticipated Project Schedule</strong>: CIP updated within three months of award (upon completion a more concrete schedule will follow). Community Meetings held 1st, 4th, 8th and 10th quarter. Website and Outreach Materials will be created in the 1st quarter and posted monthly throughout the grant project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task/Activity Lead</strong>: City: Aubrey Hale - Chief Development Official/Brownfield Project Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outputs</strong>: Updated CIP, Updated Brownfield Website, 4 Community Meetings, Brochures/Handouts, Social Media Posts, Meeting handouts, Sign-in sheets, Minutes.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Task 2: Site Inventory</th>
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| **Project Implementation**: The City’s Brownfields Project Director will work with the residents living in the target area during community meetings to update the existing site inventory for assessment. Although approximately 2,300 potential brownfield sites have already been identified out of the City’s approximate 25,000 parcels,
additional abandoned and underutilized properties identified by the residents of the target area will be researched further by City staff using a combination of the Marion County Property Appraiser's website and their established Geographical Information System (GIS) based OBIS inventory system. Once a list is compiled, the consultant will work with City of Ocala staff to use the evaluation ranking tool and determine with the help of residents the order in which the sites will be addressed.

ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Community meeting held in the 1st quarter will add to the existing inventory and use the established evaluation ranking process throughout the grant project.

iii. Task/Activity Lead: City: Aubrey Hale - Chief Development Official/Brownfield Project Director

iv. Outputs: Update Site Inventory List, Develop an Evaluation Ranking Tool

Task 3: Assessment

i. Project Implementation: The consultant will conduct Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) activities at sites selected and ranked through the Site Inventory Task, starting first with the two priority sites listed in this application. ASTM-AAI compliant Phase Is; Generic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP); Phase IIs will include the SS-QAPP. Prior to assessment, site access agreements and property eligibility determinations approval will be obtained.

ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Activities to begin in the 2nd quarter and will continue throughout the grant project.

iii. Task/Activity Lead: The consultant will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the City’s Chief Development Official/Brownfield Project Director - Aubrey Hale.

iv. Outputs: 20 Phase I ESAs, 1 Generic QAPP, 10 Phase II ESAs including SS-QAPP, Site Access Agreements and Property Eligibility Determinations.

Task 4: Remediation/Reuse Planning

i. Project Implementation: For projects identified for cleanup, the consultant will prepare the Analysis for Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) and/or Cleanup Plans. Cleanup planning will include evaluating cleanup alternatives, calculating cleanup costs, and determining site appropriate remediation and/or reuse planning to reduce health/environmental risks. A qualified planner will prepare a Brownfield Revitalization Plan for the target area per EPA planning guidelines. The consultant will assist the City in hosting charrettes/visioning sessions (virtual or in person depending on COVID restrictions) for key properties. These sessions will allow the communities an opportunity to voice their opinions and provide input on the implementation of grant funds.

ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Cleanup Plans & Charrettes to begin in the 6th quarter and will continue throughout the grant project. The Brownfield Revitalization Plan will begin in the 3rd quarter.

iii. Task/Activity Lead: The consultant will implement the technical aspects of the project with oversight from the City’s Economic Development Manager/Brownfield Project Director - Aubrey Hale.

iv. Outputs: 4 ABCAs, 2 Vision Sessions/Charrettes, 1 Brownfield Revitalization Plan

Task 5: Programmatic Support

i. Project Implementation: The City will procure a qualified environmental consultant through a competitive process. The City’s Brownfields Project Director will oversee grant implementation and administration to ensure compliance with the EPA Cooperative Agreement Work Plan, schedule, and terms and conditions. The consultant will assist the City in completing ACRES Database Reporting, Annual Financial Reporting, Quarterly Reporting, MBE/WBE Forms, and all additional Programmatic Support for the three-year term of the grant. The City staff travel budget allows for two staff to attend one national/regional/grantee brownfield training conferences/workshops.

ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Consultant procurement to happen in the 1st quarter. ACRES Reporting begins in the 1st quarter & Quarterly Reporting begins in the 2nd quarter and continues throughout the grant project. Annual Reporting and Forms created in 5th quarter, 9th quarter, and during final close out.

iii. Task/Activity Lead: City: Aubrey Hale - Chief Development Official/Brownfield Project Director

iv. Outputs: ACRES Database Reporting, 3 Annual Financial Reports, 12 Quarterly Reports, 3 MBE/WBE Forms, Programmatic Support for the three-year grant period. Two staff to attend two conferences.

b. Cost Estimates: Below are the anticipated cost estimates for this project based on past
brownfield projects as determined by local market standards with contractual hourly rates based on the skills needed for the specific tasks. The budget for this project includes travel, supplies, and contractual costs only. The City commits to spending over 70% of the budget on the Assessment Activities. Task 1 Outreach: Contractual: Updated Community Involvement Plan $3,000 (30hrs x $100), Updated Brownfield Website, Outreach Brochure/Handouts, Social Media Posts $2,000 (20hrs x $100), 4 Community Education Meetings $7,000 (56hrs x $125) ($1,750/meeting). Supplies: Maps, postage, ink, paper, printouts (at $1.00 each) $1,500. Task 2 Contractual: Site Inventory: Updated Site Inventory and Evaluation Ranking Tool $7,000 (70hrs x $100). Task 3 Assessment: Contractual: 20 Phase I ESAs (includes site eligibility/access) at $4,000 each for a total of $80,000. 1 Generic QAPP $5,500 10 Phase II ESAs including SS-QAPP at $28,000 each for a total of $280,000. Task 4 Remediation/Reuse Planning: Contractual: 4 ABCAs at $7,000 each for a total of $28,000. 2 Vision Sessions/Charrettes $6,000 ($3,000/meeting). 1 Brownfields Revitalization Plan $50,000 (Planner: 130hrs x $150; Market Analysts: 112hrs x $125; Environmental Professional: 110hrs x $150) Task 5 Programmatic Support: Contractual: ACRES Database Reporting, Annual Financial Reporting, Quarterly Reporting, MBE/WBE Forms, Programmatic Support for the three-year grant period $25,000 (200hrs x $125). Travel: Two staff to attend one conference $5,000 (flights at $750 each, 6 nights in hotel at $2,100, incidentals and per diem at $175 x 8 for a total of $1,400).

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c. Measuring Environmental Results: To ensure this EPA Brownfield Project is on schedule the City Brownfields Team, which will include the consultant, will meet quarterly to track all outputs identified in 3.a using an Excel spreadsheet and will report all progress in fulfilling the scope of work, goals, and objectives to the EPA via quarterly reports. In addition, project expenditures and activities will be compared to the projects schedule to ensure the grant project is completed within the three-year time frame. Site specific information will be entered and tracked in the ACRES database. The outputs to be tracked include the number of neighborhood meetings, public meetings, meetings with community groups and community partners, environmental assessments, ABCAs, and cleanup redevelopment plans. The outcomes to be tracked include community participation, acres assessed, acres ready for reuse, redevelopment dollars leveraged, and jobs created. The City has countermeasures in place to address program efficiency. The City will make monthly calls to their EPA Project Officer and if needed create a Corrective Action Plan to help the project to get back on schedule.

4. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

a. Programmatic Capability
i. Organizational Capacity
ii. Organizational Structure
iii. Description of Key Staff: The City of Ocala Community Development (CD) Department is tasked with undertaking economic development, redevelopment, and reinvestment initiatives, and oversees Ocala’s Brownfields Program. Aubrey Hale, City Development Official will serve as Brownfield Project Director and will manage the day-to-day grant activities. Mr. Hale has 12 years of experience in Community Planning and has been involved with brownfield redevelopment planning and grant management since 2021. Catherine Larson, Grants Coordinator will assist Mr. Hale and be responsible for the timely and successful expenditure of funds and completion of
administrative and financial requirements of the project as the **Brownfield Project Financial Operations Manager**. She will also be responsible for managing the grant finances and will be responsible for all ASAP.gov drawdowns. Ms. Larson has over 22 years of contract administration experience and possesses 18 years’ experience in state/local grant administration and implementation. She currently oversees the City’s affordable housing grant programs. **Sean Lanier, PE, City Engineer/Director Water Resources** will serve as the Technical Lead. Mr. Lanier has expertise in civil and structural engineering, including design, project management and construction management, and a demonstrated leadership ability with multi-disciplined engineering and construction project teams. A qualified environmental consultant will assist with the technical portions of the brownfield assessment grant.

iv. **Acquiring Additional Resources**: Using local contracting requirements and procurement processes, the City will procure a qualified environmental consultant to assist with technical and reporting portions of the Brownfield Community-wide Assessment, in addition to any other contractors needed to complete the project. The City will ensure compliance with the EPA’s “Professional Service” procurement process.

b. **Past Performance and Accomplishments**

i. **Currently Has or Previously Received an EPA Brownfields Grant**

(1) **Accomplishments**: When the City Brownfields Redevelopment Program was initiated in 1996, the area around the City's Downtown Square had an occupancy rate of approximately 30%, but through investments made in brownfields and infrastructure, the blocks surrounding the Square now have a 95% occupancy rate. The City has been awarded four EPA Assessment Grants; three in the amount of $200,000 in 1999, 2004, and 2006. The initial grant in 1999 was a demonstration grant used to establish a Brownfields Office to identify, categorize, and monitor sites of environmental concern. All outcomes/outputs from the three prior grants were recorded in the Property Profile, as the ACRES system was not yet established. The City’s fourth and current/active Assessment Grant was awarded in 2018 ($300,000) which has successfully completed 12 Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESA), 1 Phase I ESA Update, 5 Phase II ESAs, and 2 supplemental Phase II ESAs, with a focus on the West Ocala target area totaling **541 acres** in property transactions to date. All outcomes/outputs have been recorded in the ACRES database. Prior grants successfully exceeded 90% expenditures for the betterment of the community and the current grant (FY18) has exhausted 91% of funds as of October 1, 2021.

(2) **Compliance with Grant Requirements**: The City has maintained a very successful program. In 2008, the City’s program was challenged by the loss of its Program Director, and the program suffered as a result of that loss. The City recognized weaknesses in its past program management and took corrective steps, including improved record keeping and staff cross-training and overlap, creating today’s successful program. The current grant has been facilitated in strict conformance with the Work Plan and complied with required schedules implemented by the US EPA for on-time submittal of quarterly reports, ACRES reporting, and deliverable submittals. The current open grant held by the City was started on October 1, 2018 with an original end date of September 30, 2021, extended to December 31, 2021 and had a current balance of $29,065 as of October 1, 2021. The remaining grant funds are anticipated to be exhausted by the grant period end date through assessment of a priority site and an anticipated ABCA, along with outreach activities. As of November 2021, **88% of the FY18 Assessment Grant funds were spent directly on assessment task/activities**. Through their dedication, the City now has an extensive understanding of the requirements and process necessary to make the current and future programs a success story for their community with the support of US EPA grant funding and is prepared to begin work on facilitating the next grant immediately upon receipt of funding.
FY22 Brownfield Assessment Grant
Threshold Criteria
Threshold Criteria

1. **Applicant Eligibility**
   The City of Ocala, Florida is eligible to apply for the EPA Brownfields Community-wide Assessment Grant as a local government as defined under 2 CFR §200.64.

2. **Community Involvement**
   Ocala benefits from an engaged community that provides public input and participates in the governmental process. Informing and gathering public input when implementing changes in the community is a top priority to the City. The City has previously prepared a formal Community Involvement Plan (CIP), which will be updated as a first step in the execution of the proposed project. The CIP will rely on input from the community and will outline planned community engagement activities, a programming schedule, and stakeholders. The CIP for this project will be compatible with and build on existing public involvement in implementing the Midtown and North Magnolia redevelopment plans.

   The City has established a series of implementation strategies for its engagement goals based on its past experience of effective methods and specific target-area challenges. The City’s goals for community involvement efforts are to *give the public accessible, accurate, and timely information; ensure adequate opportunity for meaningful participation and for input to be considered; reflect community concerns, questions, and information needs in program activities and decisions; and respect and fully consider public input throughout the process*. Dedication to this process will be maintained despite COVID-19 pandemic conditions. The City offers Zoom meeting options in addition to socially distanced, in-person meetings. The City will ensure that residents are provided with ample opportunity to obtain valuable information despite social distancing requirements and will use various means of outreach that follow CDC/municipal guidelines. A modified tour using a video that provides scenes and clips of the target community will be used during webinar meetings and will be posted on City social media. Other plans include asking residents to provide their own photos and video clips to create a grassroots digital montage, as well as provide input and information to the City to develop the Brownfield Program.

   The City announced on July 15, 2021 at a Brownfield Advisory Committee Meeting, their intention to reapply for a Brownfield Assessment Grant. The City will continue seeking meaningful input from all target-area members in its Brownfield Program through online and in-person community and civic meetings, events, and targeted outreach and will leverage project-partner resources to encourage involvement and outreach/education. The City will respond directly to community input/comments during meetings or will issue statements via memorandum, online posts, or public displays within days to a week of most inquiries. The City and its eleven-member **Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC)**, made up of citizens, professionals, and business owners recruited based on their engagement in current civic and business organizations, will lead these efforts. The City and BAC social media audience will be further developed to provide a stage for distributing information. The BAC will be integral to site selection, reuse planning, and overall redevelopment activities. City webpage posts, public displays, and mailers will provide a variety of informational resources. Additionally,
many of the BAC are also members of the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), bringing a strong redevelopment mindset to the group. In the event there are non-English speaking individuals present at events, a translator will be made available.

3. **Named Contractors and Subrecipients**  
   Not Applicable

4. **Expenditure of Existing Grant Funds**  
The City currently has an active EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant (FY 2018) which is expected to be completed by December 2021. Drawdowns have been received from EPA and funds have been disbursed for 91% of the funding as of **October 1, 2021**.

   A copy of a financial report from the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) system displaying the amount of cooperative agreement funds drawn down is attached.

   The City affirms that it does not have an open Multipurpose Grant.